



# **FACT SHEET**

## **ARIZONA FERRET OUT FRAUD PROGRAM**

### **State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)**

**1789 W. Jefferson, 950A**

**Phoenix, AZ 85007**

**Phone 1-800-432-4040**

The Senior Patrol Program is designed to involve retired professionals as volunteers in the education of their peers in safeguarding the Medicare and Medicaid programs. The Senior Patrol Program grew from the development and success of the Operation Restore Trust Program that was launched in 1995 under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Operation Restore Trust was an anti-fraud cooperative partnership program originally developed in five states to test innovative safeguards in fighting fraud and abuse in both the Medicaid and Medicare programs. In 1997, Operation Restore Trust expanded to 12 additional states including Arizona.

It was discovered through focus groups, training activities and education seminars that many seniors were not comfortable discussing their problems about health services, durable medical goods, etc. with strangers or to younger people that had no idea of the problems they, as seniors, were facing. Because of these issues and others, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the Administration on Aging sought to ensure the comfort and consideration of senior citizens nation wide. The Senior Patrol Program was then implemented to address Medicare/Medicaid fraud.

Sponsored by the Department of Economic Security, Aging & Adult Administration, the Arizona Senior Patrol Ferret Out Fraud Program recruits and trains retired and semi-retired professionals to educate their peers on how to identify and report potential waste, fraud and abuse. The program establishes multilingual components for the implementation and support of the Ferret Out Fraud Program. The program works in collaboration with the Arizona State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) and the local Area Agencies on Aging. On occasion, the Senior Patrol volunteer is also a SHIP counselor trained as both a Medicare/Medicaid Fraud Specialist and insurance counselor. The retired volunteer professionals use established training programs to educate and disseminate information to Medicare beneficiaries, their families, caregivers, and social service professionals. The Senior Patrols advocate for beneficiaries on Medicare and Medicaid fraud and abuse issues as well as enhancing and expanding partnerships in support of the program.

As quoted in a recent Health and Human Services News bulletin, dated Monday June 11, 2001, "There are 52 Senior Patrol Projects that operate on a grant program administered by the Administration on Aging in every state.

“These projects are helping older Americans better understand their Medicare billing statements, so that they can take appropriate steps to correct errors,” Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson said. “Through these kinds of programs, beneficiaries can play an important role in helping the Medicare program avoid unintended errors and detect deliberate abuses.”

The news bulletin also states that “Senior volunteers undergo several days of training reviewing health care benefit statements and outlining the steps seniors can take to protect themselves. Volunteers work in local senior centers and other sites where Medicare beneficiaries gather teaching such skills as:

1. How to treat their Medicare number as they would their credit cards,
2. How to use journals to keep track of their medical services and health care instructions,
3. How to read their Medicare Summary Notices, and
4. How to get answers to billing questions.

The Senior Patrol Program is a vital and important part of the senior community. You can get involved by volunteering, hosting a presentation or attend a training. For further information or to schedule a presentation, call your local Area Agency on Aging.

**Maricopa County**

Area Agency on  
Aging Region One  
1366 E. Thomas  
Rd., Suite 108  
Phoenix, AZ 85014  
Benefits Assistance  
Program  
PH: 602-264-2255

**Pima County**

Pima Council on  
Aging  
5055 E. Broadway  
Blvd., #C104  
Tucson, AZ 85711  
Medicare  
Information  
PH: 520-790-7262

**Apache, Navajo,  
Coconino, Yavapai  
Counties**

NACOG  
119 E. Aspen Ave.  
Flagstaff, AZ 86001  
Medicare  
Information  
PH: 520-774-1895  
or 1-877-521-3500

**Pinal Gila Counties**

Pinal Gila Council for  
Senior Citizens  
P.O. Box 11452  
Casa Grande, AZ  
85230-1452  
Benefits Counseling  
PH: 520-836-2758  
or 1-800-293-9393

**Graham, Greenlee,  
Cochise, Santa  
Cruz Counties**

VICAP  
P.O. Box 3004  
Sierra Vista, AZ  
85636  
PH: 520-459-8141

**Navajo Nation**

Navajo Aging  
Services Department  
P.O. Box 1390  
Window Rock, AZ  
86515  
Medicare  
Information  
PH: 520-871-6868

**LaPaz, Mohave and  
Yuma County**

WACOG  
224 S. Third Ave.  
Yuma, AZ 85364  
Information and  
Referral  
PH: 520-782-1886

**Other Tribal  
Nations**

Inter Tribal Council  
of Arizona  
2214 N. Central Ave.  
#100  
Phoenix, AZ 85004  
Medicare Info.  
PH: 602-258-4822